



February 2009

*When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us. - Helen Keller*

## Your Happiness

Happiness is more than acquiring certain things or reaching certain goals. My happiness is not based on what is happening around me or the circumstances of my life. My happiness is based on what is happening in me. My happiness is based on how closely I am walking with my Creator. My happiness is an internal thing based on my relationship with God. It is something that cannot be taken away from me by the circumstances of my life. It can only be taken away if I walk away.



A religious vocation is not for the person who wants to live the routines just waiting for life to happen, or the person who goes randomly from event to event. It is, on the other hand, what we do with our God given gifts that's important, using them to be a real presence of God's Love for all to see. Recognize that you are not on your own on this journey. It is God who can give us our direction, and it is God who is on the journey with us. It is recognition that God is Lord and we are not.

As we look around us and see more bad news, it is now the time to reflect on who we are and where are we going. Maybe if we listen, God is calling us to all we were created to be. In America, part of the ethos, part of the American dream, is that more is better. And, more is better usually applies to the material realm. But, that doesn't pan out.... It doesn't make us happier."

About 94% of college students in the US report that they already feel "stressed and overwhelmed," the result of high expectations. Wanting it all is a disease that stays with us from youth to old age -- wanting a bigger house, fancier car, and more stuff. This begins a vicious cycle of expectation, desires, and mounting needs. Two sources of happiness that are often overlooked are family and religion. In a poll of 1,280 American teens conducted by the Associated Press and MTV, 73% said that what makes them most happy is a good relationship with their parents. Over half said that religion and spirituality is very important to them, and that the knowledge that there is a Higher Power that watches over them and controls their world makes them feel happy and secure. Interestingly, almost no one said that money makes them happy.

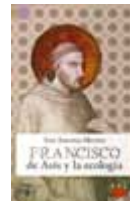
Find out if you are called to become a Franciscan Friar. Pray, reflect; discover for yourself, fulfillment joy and happiness.

## Prayer Intention in Preparation for the Chapter

In the letter of convocation to the General Chapter, the Minister General stressed the importance that the entire Order participate and cooperate through prayer for the success of this event "because every perfect gift comes from above and descends from the Father of lights' (Jn. 1:17). Trusting in the strength and spiritual enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, I establish that from the beginning of Lent 2009, in the whole Order, prayers be offered daily for the success of the General Chapter and the election of both the Minister General and his Definitory."

## RECOMMENDED READING

"Francisco de Asís y la ecología" (Eng. Trans:Francis of Assisi and the Ecology)  
José A. Merino, Madrid  
2008, pp. 156



If we consider that in the background of the ecological crisis, there is the question of justice, equality of human rights, and respect for the natural world, we would realize that the problem of the environment is not just scientific, technical, and political, but also cultural, ethical, and religious. Moreover, given that science does not prescribe what is good and is not within its competence to establish criteria of values, one will need to have recourse to ethical decisions, to the creation of a new mentality, and the influence of religion in order to offer a conscience to science, so that it can be oriented toward the common good. In this field of ecology, the voice of Francis of Assisi has so much to say and those who want to listen to him are by no means few, for they want to walk more humanly in this common home we call "planet earth" and desire to have a relationship with the whole universe.

## YouTube Video

Peace and all good, brothers:

We have new videos at YouTube!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pn6SnmGBECw>

## Join Us

Economic environment got you down? Take stock of your life. Consider a life of brotherhood and service as a Franciscan Friar. Do you feel inspired to serve the people of God in a unique way? It is challenging and will demand sacrifice. But, the rewards are out of this world. Be an instrument of change. Become a messenger of peace. Belong to something bigger than yourself. The Franciscans: a fraternity in missions.

## MATTHEW 25:35-40

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a

The Secretariat of the Chapter has prepared some prayers to be inserted in the breviary and, therefore, to be prayed daily; they can be downloaded from the website of the Order: <http://www.ofm.org/capgen09>. They are brief prayer intentions to be placed at the end of the intercessory prayers of both Evening and Morning prayers along with another prayer to recall our own vocation. The prayer goes like this:

"Be blessed, Lord, Heavenly Father! You have called us in your infinite bounty with the voice of the Spirit to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, the Lord; and you have given us to each other as brothers to be in the Church as a living memory, a sign of the Kingdom, and prophets of hope."

This second form of prayer is particularly meaningful in the 8th centenary of the foundation of the Order and helps us to praise God for the gift of our vocation, plus ask for the grace to persevere in the effort to "observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of our own and in chastity" (Rb, I, 1).

## New Franciscanvocation.com Ad



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Be on the lookout in February for an update to our Province website: [www.thefriars.org](http://www.thefriars.org).

*Pax et Bonum, Franciscan Vocation Office  
Brother Jack & Friar Johnpaul*

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stranger and you invited me in; I needed clothes and you clothed me; I was sick and you looked after me; I was in prison and you came to visit me.â€™ Then the righteous will answer him, â€œLord, when did we see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in? Or need clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you?â€™ The King will reply, â€œI tell you the truth: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for me.â€™"

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